



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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CHAFEE URGES CRMC TO REJECT MARINA EXPANSION

PROVIDENCE, RI – U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee today called upon the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) to reject the application of Champlin's Marina to expand its facility on the Great Salt Pond on Block Island.

In a letter to CRMC Chairman Michael Tikoian, Senator Chafee cited his concerns about the privatization of public trust waters, the effect on the ecology of the Great Salt Pond, and indirect impacts on a land-side conservation zone that includes the Block Island National Wildlife Refuge.

The text of the letter follows:

I am writing to let you know that I oppose the expansion of Champlin's Marina and to urge the CRMC to reject the application when it considers the matter.

While I appreciate the desire of the marina to expand its business, I have serious reservations about awarding significant public resources to a private enterprise. The project before the CRMC is a marina expansion that would cover up to four acres of the Great Salt Pond, restrict shoreline access in the area, and displace as much as 25 percent of the municipal mooring field. I know that the marina has worked hard to be a responsible member of the community on Block Island, but I simply do not see adequate public benefits associated with this project to justify this large-scale privatization of public trust waters.

In addition, local marine scientists make a compelling argument that the ecology of the Great Salt Pond is already stressed, and further, that it cannot absorb additional nutrients and other pollutants without degradation of valuable breeding and nursery habitat for fish and shellfish. As the Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee with jurisdiction over the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, I am concerned about the indirect impacts that the expansion of Champlin's could have on the conservation zone on the northern end of the pond, which includes the Block Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Clearly, there are strongly held views on both sides of this issue, and I appreciate your willingness to allow the project to undergo extensive public scrutiny. Nevertheless, there is a great deal at stake in this decision, and I hope that after due consideration, the Council will defeat the proposed expansion of Champlin's Marina.

Thank you for taking my views into account on this matter.

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